

of Representatives, by a vote of 278-67, rejected an adjournment resolution. Immediately following that vote, according to press accounts, the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. LIVINGSTON, sought recognition for the purpose of attempting to bring up a clean disaster assistance supplemental appropriation bill intended to provide sufficient and necessary assistance for a number of programs to ensure that there will be no delay in getting assistance to the victims of these natural disasters. As I understand it, the total amount of that proposal was approximately \$1 billion. Had the House taken it up and passed this interim disaster assistance bill, I am certain the Senate could have done the same and the President had indicated that he would have signed it.

The larger disaster assistance supplemental bill that is in conference contains some very controversial and difficult issues which have nothing to do with providing the necessary funds for disaster victims, or with the nearly \$2 billion contained in the bill for aid to our men and women in uniform around the world—particularly Bosnia—engaged in peacekeeping operations, or with the \$750 million in funding for veterans compensation and pension. The conferees are in agreement, to a large extent, with the funding issues in the bill. But, these contentious, extraneous issues have slowed the progress of the conference despite the skillful and patient manner with which the distinguished chairman of the conference, Mr. LIVINGSTON, has conducted each meeting of the conferees. He has shown the ability to proceed as expeditiously as possible, while at the same time protecting all Members' rights to fully air their views on each matter before the conference. I have nothing but high praise for his leadership, as well as that of the distinguished ranking member, Mr. OBEY, or of our chairman, Senator STEVENS, as well as for all of the chairmen and ranking members of this conference who have worked many hours to resolve most of the differences in the bill. I would have preferred, as I am sure all of the conferees would have preferred, to be able to stand here today urging the Senate to adopt a completed conference agreement on H.R. 1469, the emergency disaster assistance supplemental appropriation bill.

Since, for the reasons I have stated, that was not possible, I express to the American people and particularly to the hundreds of thousands of disaster victims throughout the country, my deep regret that their elected representatives in Congress have chosen to recess for the Memorial Day holiday without having taken any action to address their desperate need for Federal assistance. At the same time, I urge them not to despair and pledge my efforts to do all that I can to work with the distinguished chairman of the committee, Mr. STEVENS, and the distinguished chairman and ranking member

of the House Appropriations Committee, Mr. LIVINGSTON, and Mr. OBEY, to complete final action on H.R. 1469 as quickly as is humanly possible when the conference next convenes, hopefully during the first week of June.

#### NATIONAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this week is National Emergency Medical Services Week. The people who work and volunteer in the emergency medical services field provide an invaluable service for all American citizens—they provide us with a safety net. This is necessary because regardless of how careful we try to be, we are all subject to the whims of fate. Common sense and practicality are often not enough to prevent accidents caused by the carelessness of ourselves or others. In these times of need, we rely on dedicated emergency medical services personnel. They take care of us when we cannot take care of ourselves.

I want to take this time to recognize the special disposition that a person must have to be an emergency medical service worker. These people all share common characteristics such as the desire to help, as well as the ability to feel empathy for, the people they assist. Of course, kindness and willingness to help alone are not enough. These workers must also possess the skills needed to do the job and to do it well. These skills can only be acquired through hard work and dedication. The working lives of emergency medical service workers are characterized by a lack of predictability in both content and scheduling. They have no routine to rely on. They truly must be ready for any thing at any time.

Although emergency medical service workers across the country have many things in common, they also face many different challenges and dangers every day. There are some who must fight traffic, some who fight long distances and bad roads, and some who are forced to face the fear and possibility of losing their lives in order to try and save ours. Despite all of the challenges and dangers faced by these dedicated workers, they continue to be efficient, to be dependable, and to be effective in saving lives day after day.

In a world which is fraught with peril, it comforts me to know that there are people that we can count on in our hour of need. And so, Mr. President, I am proud to recognize this week as National Emergency Medical Services week to acknowledge the important work and strong character of the dedicated emergency medical services personnel. We are fortunate to have this opportunity to show our appreciation for all of their tireless work on our behalf.

#### THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday,

May 22, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,344,819,275,286.24. (Five trillion, three hundred forty-four billion, eight hundred nineteen million, two hundred seventy-five thousand, seven hundred eighty-six dollars and twenty-four cents)

One year ago, May 22, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,117,440,000,000. (Five trillion, one hundred seventeen billion, four hundred forty million)

Five years ago, May 22, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$3,926,208,000,000. (Three trillion, nine hundred twenty-six billion, two hundred eight million)

Ten years ago, May 22, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,289,817,000,000. (Two trillion, two hundred eighty-nine billion, eight hundred seventeen million)

Twenty-five years ago, May 22, 1972, the Federal debt stood at \$428,608,000,000 (Four hundred twenty-eight billion, six hundred eight million) which reflects a debt increase of nearly \$5 trillion—\$4,916,211,275,286.24 (Four trillion, nine hundred sixteen billion, two hundred eleven million, two hundred seventy-five thousand, two hundred eighty-six dollars and twenty-four cents) during the past 25 years.

#### HONORING ASTRONAUT JERRY LININGER

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, tomorrow we will welcome home a true American hero, Eastpointe, MI native, astronaut Jerry Lininger. Jerry is returning to Earth this weekend aboard the space shuttle *Atlantis* after a 5 month mission on the Russian space station, *Mir*.

I am sure that Jerry expected his 5 months in space to provide him with innumerable opportunities and challenges, but the challenges he and his crewmates faced were way beyond expectations. They had to fix antifreeze fume leaks which threatened the space station's air supply. The oxygen-generating systems malfunctioned, forcing the crew to activate three backup oxygen canisters each day to provide them with the oxygen they needed to breathe. And, Jerry and his Russian fellow scientists had to extinguish the worst fire ever aboard an orbiting human spacecraft, an ordeal which captured the attention of millions of people in the United States, Russia and around the world. It seemed from this earthly vantage point that the 10 plagues of space travel were being visited on *Mir*—leaks, lack of oxygen, humidity, fire, temperature, excess CO<sub>2</sub>, loss of power, lack of supplies and replacement parts, claustrophobia, and separation from family. When the space shuttle *Atlantis* recently linked up with the *Mir* space station to deliver much needed repair parts and to pick him up, Jerry may have made the understatement of the year when he remarked to its crew members that it was "nice to see you."

While the drama played out in space, Jerry Lininger's professionalism came to the fore. He continued his work on